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Your New Year's Body Begins BEFORE CHRISTMAS

By Dr. Nirali Patel

Each year, we celebrate New Year's Eve counting down with our loved ones. The moment the ball drops and the fireworks go off, we get caught up in the moment with an embrace and a kiss. It's out with the old and in with the new. What could be more natural than pledging to bring out a new you?

We resolve to improve our eating habits, cutting back on salts and sugars, to sign up for the gym and to promise ourselves that we will actually go. For most of us, these wonderful resolutions rarely make it all the way through the first day of spring. What can we do differently this year?

The problem with New Year's resolutions is the timing. Sure, it comes at the start of a new year, but it is also at the tail end of a season replete with company parties, large family feasts and nonstop shopping excursions from Black Friday to after-Christmas sales right next to the food court. In short, we get used to eating too much and not having enough time to exercise. Embracing this festive lifestyle at the end of the year makes it that much harder to turn it all around suddenly.

So, why wait until the 1st of January to make these New Year's resolutions? What you can do differently this year is to be proactive and to get a jump on your resolutions. Commit to making all the right eating and fitness decisions before the holiday season. This means planning ahead for the table with healthier options, giving your family and friends feedback about what to bring to the potluck and enlisting your loved ones to keep you accountable. Maybe they will all join you in being health-conscious to help ensure fulfilling family gatherings long into the future!

Visiting loved ones is often the reason that we have less time for fitness. By sharing our goals with them, we can tap them as our best source of support through the holidays. They're here to connect and celebrate with us. Since that togetherness is what's important, we can plan and connect over physical activities that are good for body, mind and spirit.

An active lifestyle is its own reward, not just a way to get to a certain weight goal. Your body feels best when it is healthy and moving which also keeps your mind fit and wards off depression. That's the best way for a family to enjoy the holidays! Exercising means having more energy for fun family games.

Begin by sharing your sincere commitment to begin your resolutions early. Enlist your family's support in creating new traditions to support your best active selves, like modifying old family recipes to be more healthy, reducing or eliminating carbs, processed sugars, caffeine and alcohol. It's easier to pass on unhealthy treats when there are plenty of healthy, delicious substitutes. Get everyone's help putting food away after meals and then do something physically engaging in another area so that we won't be tempted to continue snacking.

It is easier to maintain an existing diet and exercise routine than to let it go completely and then restart it. The more we make exceptions, the more the exceptions become the rule. By starting early, we won't be discouraged and daunted January 1st. Even if we don't stick to the plan with perfection during the holidays, we will be that much more ahead on our resolution for the New Year. We'll truly get the most of the holidays in the process. The new you can do it!



HOLIDAY MAKEOVER Your Time to Shine

By Becka Cady

Holiday is the moment to sprinkle some sparkle, wear that ravishing red, and highlight to glow. From office parties to family dinners, the holiday season is stocking-stuffed with social events. It's time to look and feel your best! Just like you'd choose a theme to decorate your home, you'll want to choose your Holiday Style. Use these tips to help you glow from the inside out!

SKIN: Hold on to hydration! Add a few drops of facial oil to your moisturizer to help boost radiance and lock in hydration. Many of these oils are multi-purpose and great for both skin and hair! Prefer a treatment? Sheet masks are an easy, inexpensive way to pamper yourself and add multiple benefits to the skin including moisture. (Perfect stocking-stuffers for you and friends!)

MAKEUP: Grab the glow! Highlighters are a quick, easy way to add luminosity and accent. For a natural glow, look for a highlight that complements your skin tone. For example, choose a gold highlight for a yellow undertone. For a high-watt, bold glow choose a highlight color that is opposite to your natural skin tone. Apply to high points of the face such as tops of the cheeks, bridge of the nose, cupid's bow, and inner corner of the eyes.

FRAGRANCE: It's time to pack away the fresh floral scents and flip-flops and unwrap warmth and woods with your winter fragrance. Look for perfumes with rich, bold notes like leather, pink peppercorn, cedarwood, or our favorite vanilla bourbon! Think these aren't for you? Dare to be different! The latest fragrance trends are woman embracing these bold scents. Build your confidence by spraying it on your skin to test and see if it fits your style.

LIPSTICK & NAILS: 'Tis the season to play with those festive, decorative colors like metallic golds, silvers, or that classy crimson red that you have always wanted to wear. Lips and nails are the perfect accessory to any outfit. No need to be a makeup pro. Minimal makeup with just mascara, highlight and bright red lips adds elegance to any outfit. Be sure to grab a lip stain or matte pencil to ensure your lip color lasts all night, no matter which wine glass you're on!

ACCESSORIES: Match your purse and accessories to your nails! Gold nails? Choose a metallic gold clutch with gold bracelets. A trendy way to make an impression is to match your jewelry or bag to your nails. Not ready to sparkle with gold? Red and black is a classic way to stand out.

Whether you choose bold and bright or classic and classy, be your version of beautiful. Happy Holidays!



GIVE YOURSELF THE GIFT OF *Peace for the Holidays*

By Dr. Chris Colgin

Fatigue and stress fall into a vicious cycle where stress can keep you up at night and lack of sleep decreases your ability to manage stress. This can be especially overwhelming around the holidays when we feel the pressure to be productive while enjoying life or end up feeling like a failure. To this mixture, we add chaotic Christmas shopping and visiting family members, and no one's going to ask for that recipe! Yet it is as much a part of the season as tinsel and bright bows.

Stress is strongly linked to depression, sleep problems, tension, anxiety, making mistakes, reduced concentration, apathy, and the list goes on. As stress levels rise, quality of life is diminished. So how do we give ourselves the gift of peace on earth this holiday season?

START BY SETTING THE INTENTION FOR THE DAY

Don't make life all about your to-do list. Take time to get into a more healthy mindset. Remember to enjoy the process, even of Christmas shopping. It can all be part of the memories we create. Diet and exercise. We've addressed this one elsewhere this issue, and it's not to be overlooked for keeping us at the top of our game. Proper nutrition is everything when it comes to functioning mentally, emotionally and physically.

MEDITATION OR PRAYER

What better time to start or renew your daily devotional? If you're accustomed to just praying, take an extra minute to breath and be open to listening rather than merely enumerating our stresses and grievances. This part is often the

most beneficial and overlooked part of prayer, both in a spiritual sense and for peace of mind. If you're not particularly spiritual, then skip the prayer and stick with meditation. It's wonderful for clearing mental noise and putting us in a peaceful frame of mind.

GET ENOUGH SLEEP

I know it's easier said than done with everything going on, but it's the most important step. Make a commitment to getting enough rest, even if it means some extra things get pushed off until tomorrow. Some food that support healthy sleep are walnuts, almonds, lettuce, tuna, cherry juice, chamomile, honey, kale, ashwagandha and hummus. Try to avoid alcohol and caffeine late in the day as these interrupt sleep.



THE BREAKTHROUGH DIET *that Wards off Winter Blues*

By Dr. Chris Colgin

Numerous studies link weather conditions to mood and mental health from temperature to the amount of sunlight we receive. We can make up for the change of the seasons with the other strongly linked factor - what we eat! Here are some foods that counterbalance those winter blues and brighten our moods keeping us energized. They're rich in vitamins and minerals like magnesium, calcium, iron, and omega-3 fatty acids.

Spinach contains folic acid (vitamin B9), which helps produce new cells that actively participate in the regulation of serotonin, a neurotransmitter that determines your mood by regulating anxiety and happiness, and even your social behavior. However, spinach isn't the only leafy green that confers such benefits. Others, such as kale, chard and collard greens, are high in potassium, magnesium, and calcium. Leafy greens also help your body maintain its sleep cycles helping to restore tired muscles and regulate stress hormones.

Nuts, such as pecans, almonds, and walnuts, contain tryptophan, an amino acid precursor to serotonin. They also contain nutrients including healthy monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats and a moderate amount of protein. Also, nuts are an incredible source of dietary fiber and the B complex vitamins and trace elements like iron, calcium, zinc, magnesium, potassium and antioxidant minerals like copper and selenium. Nuts also contain phytochemicals like flavonoids and plant sterols.

Magnesium deficiency is common and can lead to chronic fatigue, heightened muscle tension, irregular heartbeat, restless leg syndrome, and insomnia, all of which result in feelings of depression. In fact, the average intake is around 250 milligrams a day, a low value compared to the recommended daily amount of 320 - 420 milligrams. Additionally, magnesium has been shown to reduce the risk of type 2 diabetes.

Calcium and magnesium are not only required for serotonin regulation, but also for absorption of vitamin D. During winter, there isn't enough sunlight to process the vitamin D in our bodies. Foods rich in both trace elements will serve as important sources that enable the body to produce more serotonin and dopamine (the feel-good hormone). Some excellent sources of magnesium are spinach, chard, pumpkin seeds, yogurt, almonds, black beans, avocado, figs, dark chocolate and bananas.

